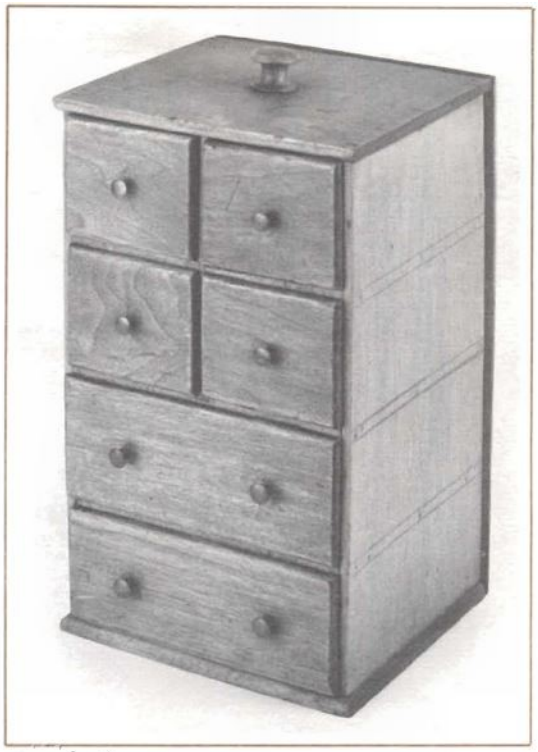
Shaker Sewing Box



This Shaker sewing box, from the collection at Hancock Shaker Village, in Hancock, Massachusetts, is typical of the sewing articles the Shakers often made. Except for the drawer fronts, which are made from ¾ in. thick stock, and the divider, which is ½ in. thick, the remaining parts in the project are all ⅜ thick. This sewing box was made from pine, although the drawer fronts are butternut.

Begin by cutting to size the box parts, A through F. Use the dado head to make the ¼ x ⅜ in. rabbets in the sides (B) and in the divider (F). Reset the dado head to cut the ½ x ½ in. rabbet in the center of the upper one of the two wide spacers (D) that will accept the bottom end of the ½ in. thick divider. Use the router with a 7/16 in. round-over bit to make the 7/16 in. radius around the front and sides of the top and bottom pieces (A), as shown in the radius detail. Now assemble the box, using brads to attach the top, bottom, and back.

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Although we have parted out each drawer separately in the Bill of Materials list, the drawer sides (parts G, K, O, and S) are all the same, so simply make 12 of them. The backs for the four small drawers (H and L) are all cut to ⅞ x 2⅞ x 2⅞, while the four bottoms (I and M) are all ⅜ x 3⅜ x 7. The large drawer parts are also identical with the two backs (P and T) cut to ⅞ x 2⅞ x 7, and the two bottoms (Q and U) ⅜ x 7 x 7¾. The essential difference in the drawers then, is the fronts (parts J, N, R, and V). As shown in the drawer front details, the upper and lower drawer fronts are 3⅞ in. high, while the middle drawer fronts are 3½ in. high. As we know, the Shakers were perfectionists, and the subtle differences in these drawer fronts are actually designed to provide an even ⅛ in. space between all the drawers. Round the perimeter of each drawer front with the 7/16 in. round-over bit, and cut the rabbets as shown to accept the sides and bottoms. Like the box itself, the drawers are assembled with brads. Authentic cut nail style brads similar to those used by the Shakers are available from The Tremont Nail Company, P.O. Box 111, Elm St. at Rt. 28, Wareham, MA 02571. Order the ¾ in. long headless brads. When making the drawers, keep in mind that they must be sized slightly less than their respective openings.

Finish the drawers before mounting the ½ in. diameter brass drawer knobs (X). Several applications of Watco brand penetrating oil will impart an attractive natural patina to the wood, a look the Shakers preferred because it was restrained and not ostentatious.

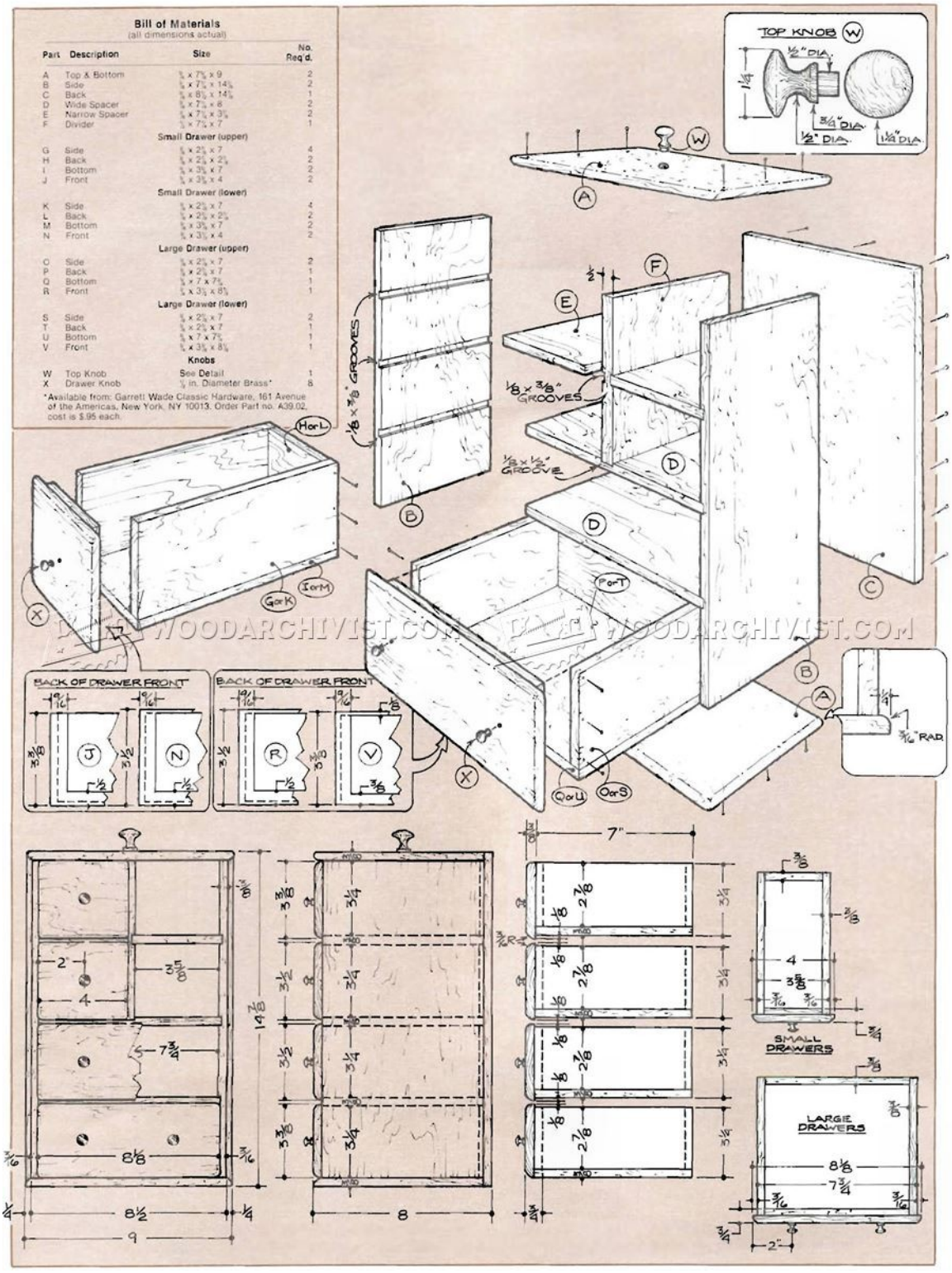
The 1¼ in. diameter wooden knob on the sewing box top (used for carrying the sewing box) can be turned on the lathe, or a similar 1¼ in. knob can be ordered from Shaker Workshops, P.O. Box 1028, Concord MA 01742. Specify part number W341. The knob is tenoned in the traditional Shaker fashion. Drill a ½ in. diameter hole in the top to accept the knob tenon, and glue the knob in place. WWJ

Bill of Materials

(all dimensions actual)

Part	Description	Size	No. Req'd.
A	Top & Bottom	¾ x 7½ x 9	2
B	Side	¾ x 7½ x 14¾	2
C	Back	¾ x 8½ x 14¾	1
D	Wide Spacer	¾ x 7½ x 6	2
E	Narrow Spacer	¾ x 7½ x 3½	2
F	Divider	¾ x 7½ x 7	1
	Small Drawer (upper)		
G	Side	¾ x 2½ x 7	4
H	Back	¾ x 2½ x 2½	2
I	Bottom	¾ x 3⅜ x 7	2
J	Front	¾ x 3⅜ x 4	2
	Small Drawer (lower)		
K	Side	¾ x 2½ x 7	4
L	Back	¾ x 2½ x 2½	2
M	Bottom	¾ x 3⅜ x 7	2
N	Front	¾ x 3⅜ x 4	2
	Large Drawer (upper)		
O	Side	¾ x 2½ x 7	2
P	Back	¾ x 2½ x 7	1
Q	Bottom	¾ x 7 x 7⅜	1
R	Front	¾ x 3½ x 8⅛	1
	Large Drawer (lower)		
S	Side	¾ x 2½ x 7	2
T	Back	¾ x 2½ x 7	1
U	Bottom	¾ x 7 x 7⅜	1
V	Front	¾ x 3½ x 8⅛	1
	Knobs		
W	Top Knob	See Detail	1
X	Drawer Knob	¾ in. Diameter Brass*	8

*Available from: Garrett Wade Classic Hardware, 161 Avenue of the Americas, New York, NY 10013. Order Part no. A39.02, cost is $.95 each.



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